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WALIOR POEMS

WILLIAM SHARP

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GWALIOR POEMS





WILLIAM SHARP

GWALIOR POEMS

BY

WILLIAM SHARP



LONDON

CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LTD

1915

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APOLOGIA

THIS little book of unpretentious poems is published in memory of William Sharp who wrote them. His was a singularly attractive personality, and his untimely death from enteric in India was a terrible blow to the many who loved him. After taking honours in two triposes at Cambridge he had joined the service of a native state as Vice-Principal of the Sardars' (Nobles') School situated on the historic rock fortress of Gwalior, and had not been a full three years in the East when, on 25th August 1914, at the age of twenty-four, his thread of life was cut short by fate. Was it because destiny had decreed him so brief a span that this north country (Westmorland) boy possessed a natural yet almost uncanny insight into the life of those among whom he dwelt ?

v

Æschylus when in his old age he wrote an epitaph for his tomb at Gela made no mention of his poetry, but briefly stated that the grove of Marathon could bear witness to his prowess and the long-haired Mede who felt it.

William Sharp never had the chance he had hoped for to fight against the Germans. All he could do was to make the pluckiest of fights against death in a hospital ward. Yet in one respect, if small things may be compared to great, he was not unlike the noble Æschylus. He would not have wished to be recalled to memory as a poet, certainly not as a minor poet. Rather he would have preferred remembrance as a useful full back at hockey, as a tennis player, as a normally good fellow in half a dozen different ordinary ways. He did not mind the fact that he scribbled verses being known any more than he minded people seeing that on occasions he was fond of poker patience, but he had no serious intention of submitting his work to the ordeal of print before he was thirty, by which time he

had hoped to have made up his mind about many things besides versification.

Yet it is believed that these poems, found by chance in a pocket-book after his death, and now published by some of his friends, who make no claim to be literary critics, may not fail to interest and give pleasure to many who never had the happiness of acquaintance with the author.

H. M. B.



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HEIMWEH

THERE 's the wind across the heather that I know,
There 's the sun upon the heather that I 've seen,
There 's the snow upon the heather when the
birds lie close together :

If you 've ever known these things you know
just what I mean.

I have heard the cushats cooing in the fir,
I have heard the plashing of the Old Mill wheel,
I have heard the church bells' ringing mingled
with the throstle's singing :

If you 've ever heard these things you know just
what I feel.

Have you heard the startled crying of the grouse ?
Have you felt the sudden tug upon your line ?
Have you seen the sunlight glimmer in the
dragon's wings a-shimmer ?

If you 've known these things you know the long-
ing that is mine.

I have heard the peewits wailing on the heath,
I have felt the dank mist settling like a pall,
I have heard the world's deep sobbing for a
 stilled heart lately throbbing:
If you've heard the mother calling you can't
 forget her call.

Can you feel the purple greatness of the hills?
Can you taste the keenness of the mountain air?
Can you hear the stream's white splashing?
 Can you see the sunbeams flashing?
If your dreams are memories, they'll call from
 anywhere.

17th July 1913.

UNTIL THE SHADOWS FLEE

My heart and my hair are grey, she said,
And grey is all my living.
I follow the path I needs must tread,
And take the good God's giving.

Always I pray for wind from the West,
To give back my son to me.
On wings of the East he went, unblest,
My lad to the western sea.

'Twas night, I think, when he went away,
Or else he went in a mist.
(I know the sun shone fair one day),
But I know that he went unkissed.

And whether his head lie soft and warm,
Whether his pillow be stone ;
And whether he live where thousands swarm,
Or fight his battle alone,

He tells me not. But a word shall come
From over the hissing foam ;
The word shall come though the world be dumb,
‘ O mother, your son comes home.’

And since I dreamt, though the word were late,
The word that I know well came,
I speak to my neighbour at the gate,
Who mocks, and I feel no shame.

’Tis a foolish word my neighbour gives,
She says that I dream always ;
She says that she knows where my lad lives,
That he dreams away his days.

She says there’s a place for folk who dream,
For those who live in a mist,
And I may join my son, for I seem,
Like him, to be fairy-kist.

So when she speaks in this foolish wise
I must sit me down and pray ;
Always I pray that a west wind rise,
For the east took him away.

But once I dreamt that a west wind blew,
And brought me to heaven's stair ;
(On wings of that wind my white mist flew),
And my lad was waiting there.

4th October 1912.

MIRAGE

WHEN whitely gleams the moonlight on her
grave,

There in the Blessed Isles ; and languid winds,
Spice-laden, whisper in the tamarinds ;
When moduled murmurs of the far-off wave
Roll faintly o'er the intervening miles,
I fancy that my love awakes and smiles.

I fancy that my love awakes and smiles,
And shakes the tangles of her fair gold hair ;
' I dreamt myself in heav'n, and you not there,
O best Beloved of my Blessed Isles.'
And then I fancy that she sings to me
Sweet songs that mingle with the moaning sea.

Sweet songs that mingle with the moaning sea,
Sweet songs that hover in the scented air,
Until remembrance sleeps ; and pain and care,
Like mist before the sun, disperse and flee.

The night and she do use a thousand charms.
Ah me ! I dream the world is in my arms.

Ah me ! to dream the world is in my arms !
Ah me ! to wake and hear the languid winds
Make scented music with the tamarinds !
To wake, and tingling still with love's alarms,
To hear the booming of the far-off wave,
To see the moonlight gleaming on her grave !

September 1912.

THE VISION OF ACCEPTING PAN

I HYMNED me a hymn to the great god Pan
 (I sought for his revealing),
Sweet as the sweetest that mortal can,
Strong as the strongest given to man,
 So hymned I all my feeling.

‘My song,’ I said, ‘thou art wide as the wold’
 (O Pan, where art thou sleeping?)
Strong as the beech that grew from of old,
Purged by the sun, cleansed fair by the cold,
 Pan take thee for his keeping!

‘Oh take thee thy thousand tongues of the sea’
 (Yea one is for his hearing).
‘Yield thou the sweet and the strength of thee,
Pour out thy deeps of pain and of glee.’
 O song, I mark his nearing!

Faintly he piped on his pipes far away
 (Great Pan, oh haste thy coming !)
'Twas cold as the chill of waking day,
Small and as keen as the young moon's ray :
 The forest leaves were drumming.

He filled full the air with music and dread
 (O Pan, I marked thy nearing !)
The music passed, and the beech tree said,
' Thy song is a garland for his head.'
 O song, thou hadst thy hearing !

8th August 1912.

DEAD SEA FRUIT

Nor all the waters of forgetfulness
Nor all the flight of years—
Not all the wand'ring in the wilderness
Nor seas of tears
May rid my soul of sin, my heart of fears.

Though sackcloth were my garment for all time,
And ashes crowned my head,
Though penance sore I did for all my crime
Till I were dead,
The past were yet the past, all done, all said.

Until a man have known, he may not love,
Nor sin till love be spent—
Knowledge and love and sin with life I wove,
Hell's way I went—
Yea, this I did—yet I am not content.

May 1912.

THE HAPPY DEAD

THEY know the peace
Of an age-long sleep,
Forget the dreams
Of a might have been.

.

Their toil is past ; and there shall be
For them exceeding quietness ;
The all-embracing gentleness
Of Earth, upon whose lap they lie,
Shall o'er them steal ; and tortured hearts
That once beat but to pain are stilled.
The minds that strove, that schemed, that
toiled,
Know now that these be vain ; and aught
That makes for toil is emptiness.
But rest is good, and good is peace,
And life is rounded off with sleep ;
For peace is life's fulfilling.

Their wisdom is to rest and wait,
Their gladness is that naught shall change.
They know no stir shall enter there ;
The sleeper must not wake again.

6th February 1912.

VIA DOLORIS. CHEMIN D'ENFER

I PASSED my daily way through Hell,
 I marked its folk ;
I saw there faces I knew well,
 But no one spoke.

I met my dear friend face to face,
 He looked at me ;
I pitied him his evil case,
 He pitied me.

No word of pity forth would come,
 Long though I tried ;
And he in pity stood there dumb,
 His tongue was tied.

But one I hated much on earth
 (He hated me),
He mocked me with an unclean mirth
 And came to me.

I met him with a welcome grim
In a like key :
I spoke out fair my hate of him,
His tongue was free.

September 1912.

O Love, my Love, when the dark still night,
Like a scented pall, shuts out my sight,
Will you come and make glad my eyes with light ?

O Love, my Love, when the day is drear,
My heart grows sick with an unknown fear,
Do you know it would leap to feel you near ?

O Love, my Love, when the storm is past,
And the brooding clouds are gone at last,
Do you know how I yearn to hold you fast ?

O Love, my Love, if men deemed me dead,
And deaf earth covered my dumb blind head,
Do you know I should hear each word you said ?

12th September 1912.

THE POINT OF VIEW

I. THE VOLUNTEER

WE were all of us shocking thrusters,
And no one could ride a bit ;
And few of us cared for musters,
Or cared when the Adjy. cursed us ;
And most of us carried on just as
If our words were Holy Writ.

II. THE ADJUTANT

Let me have the horses, and give me half a day ;
Give me leave to forage for twenty bales of hay ;
Let me have the tunics, and (swear you 'll keep
it chup !)
Mix the lot together : I 'll make a better troop.

III. THE GENERAL PUBLIC

We never saw them do their drills,
Or any courses fire,

They never gave us martial thrills
Or strummed the martial lyre,
They didn't wear a martial air
Or put on martial side.
Believed we ne'er they soldiers were,
In fact we never tried.

2
August 1912.

FREE TRANSLATIONS FROM HAFIZ

LONG the plaint of the Babu, the sleep of the
Chaukidar,
Longer the faces of those who love not the
Budget are.

Dost thou babble of speed, my son ? Take then
a tip from me,
Go, watch the Sipri train ! Observe thou the
P.W.D.

What though thy bills increase, and oh ! what if
the rupees flit ?
Lift up thy voice for a peg, for still thou canst
sign a chit.

Drink to thy evil fortune, let Shaitan give of his
worst,
Yield up thy bills to heaven, to Allah who sent
the thirst.

When troubles descend upon thee, wilt thou sit
down and weep ?

Nay ! borrow from all thy friends, invest in the
Derby sweep.

Thou takest a hand at auction ? wouldst thou
be loved indeed ?

Then trump thou thy partner's aces : return him
not his lead.

Talk thou of ' dogs ' to the M.F.H. : ask if they
hunt the hare.

He cannot choose but to love thee—if not, why
shouldst thou care ?

Order thy life to thy liking ; so long as life shall
last,

Care not a bit for the Future, heed not a scrap
the Past.

25th July 1912.

THE BARGAIN OF THE PEOPLE AND THE GODS

PARCHED is the earth, and past the time of rains ;
Loud is the people's moan, great their distress,
Less grows their hoarded store, and less and less
The weary ryot to his god complains :

‘ O Shiva ! Ram ! O gods of hills or plains !

O Sita ! Krishna ! gods of gentleness !

Whatever gods there be who thus play chess
With us their naked servants, oh send rains.’

Yet still the eye of Heaven unwinking glows,
And still the plague adds thousands to the slain,
And still men curse their gods, and turn again
Unto their native dust, become—who knows ?
The gods gaze on the victims in their rows
Until the tale is told : then lo ! the rain.

July 1912.

A DREAM that lasts not a night,
A hope that lives not a day,
A love that too soon takes flight,
A hate that passes away.
This life is made short by God
That man himself has made vain,
And life which ends in the sod
Would the heart desire again ?

15th March 1912.

AN Interlude—
A passing show—
A glimpse of sun,
And then—we go !

A broken song,
A falling rose,
A faded dream,
And then—who knows ?

A face half seen—
A shaded light—
One brave ' Well Met,'
And then—the night !

Yes, so it is,
This life is vain,
And who would ask
To live again ?

29th March 1912.

FATE'S JEST

THE years are torn from the bosom of time,
Each with its burden of mocking sorrow;
To-day's deep wound is a jest to-morrow,
And a grievous loss makes a laughing rhyme.

When his heart is bleeding a man must sing—
The form of his grief is a careless care,
And a man must laugh at his soul laid bare,
For a naked soul is a mirthful thing.

For now is our Hope but a broken reed,
And Faith the last grim joke from the Pit;
With our Love as the sauce to savour it,
Our Life is a sop to the Furies' greed.

4th April 1912.

LA JOYEUSE

SHE is a rippling song,

La Joyeuse.

A laughing silvern song,

Ma Joyeuse.

Her tripping feet hold music's measure,

Her soul is all compact of pleasure,

She loveth well and long,

La p'tite Joyeuse.

Nor aught she saith or doth can e'en be wrong.

She is a poet's dream,

La Joyeuse.

A 'blue-eyed fairy' dream,

Ma Joyeuse.

With ready eyes for Love or Pity,

Blue as the blue of God's own city,

She maketh Heaven's gleam,

La p'tite Joyeuse,

And to her sight are all things as they seem.

She is a summer's night,

La Joyeuse.

A dusk, sweet, scented night,

Ma Joyeuse.

Fragrant her hair as rich red roses,

Incarnate she of souls of posies,

She holdeth all delight,

La p'tite Joyeuse.

Lo, lovely is her love, and much her might.

8th April 1912.

PERDITA

VAINLY to me they bring
Gifts for my pleasuring.
My soul will none of them and I must die.

Dreary the passing days,
Hollow the people's praise,
Heavy and sore my heart with weighted sin.

I loathe the smiling throng,
Hateful the dance and song,
Lovely the peace that comes with sin confessed.

The Moon's cold gleaming eye,
The Earth-despising sky
View me with scorn : the daughter of a king.

Bitter the tears I shed,
Weary my aching head,
And day and night are one, and death is sleep.

December 1911.

THE WOOD

THE wood is full of all dark shapes
And things that fly,
Black trees that flaunt distorted limbs
Mock the blue sky.

Sometimes the sun upon it shines
But enters not,
Then shadows revel wilder still
In that wild spot.

The moon gleams on those twisted forms
With colder light,
And owls and ghosts and haunted bats
The dark affright.

But when the wood is white with snow
It terrifies,
The frigid calm of ice-bound dark
Upon it lies.

Now once the trees were young and straight,
Both free and fair ;
The sun and wind passed, welcomed, through,
And God lived there.

8th October 1912.

THE SCINDHIA HUNT

JACK is in his hole on the One Tree Hill,

Rout him out !

The sun 's barely up and the dew lies still,

The scent 's breast high : we 'll gallop till we kill,

So rout him out !

Hounds all together, working with a will,

Doing all they know, spoiling for a kill,

You bet they 'll rout him out.

Jack has left his hole on the One Tree Hill,

Gone away !

Making for the rough, running with a will,

Mounting the hillside, showing all his skill,

He 's gone away !

It 's view halloa ! we 're riding for a kill,

Running up a score, but Jack pays the bill,

Because he 's gone away.

So we give three cheers for stout-hearted Jack,
And three more !

Then we 'll give three cheers for the Scindhia
pack

(And the best of sport may they never lack),
And then three more !

The sun 's riding high : hounds are feeling slack,
Time for the field to take the homeward track,
So we 'll give just three more !

13th October 1912.

HAFIZ ON THE RACES

TRULY the world is wicked : there may be Edens
 around,
But sure, 'tis not on a racecourse that angels are
 ever found.

My son, if a stranger approach thee, accost thee
 as ' Captain, dear ! '
Give him a drink, but heed not the tip that he
 pours in thine ear.

From the shirt bedecking his rider, from the
 gleaming coat of a horse,
Thou learnest not if he be rapid, nor whether he
 stayeth the course.

Trust not the wily bookie : bet if thou wilt and
 must.
So shall thy rupees vanish beyond the moth and
 the rust.

Beloved by all is the punter who betteth with
vigour and pluck.

Cursed is he that hedgeth, denying his goddess,
Good Luck.

If thine eggs in one basket be broken, yet shalt
thou be not afraid.

Without the breaking of eggs was there ever an
omelette made ?

If Fortune, the jade, be timid, how doth the wise
man woo ?

Remember that boldness wins her : fear and thou
shalt rue.

When Fortune's face is against thee, then think
of the sage advice,

Providence playeth but seldom, yet ever with
loaded dice.

My son, heed the words of thy father, who hath
drunk life's cup to its dregs,

Seek not to instruct thy grandsire's wife regard-
ing the sucking of eggs.

TO THE GODS OF THE HOT WEATHER

COME not upon us with brazen wheeled speeding,
Linger and tarry awhile on the way,
Hark to the voice of our agonised pleading,
Come slowly, we pray.

And having come, oh then deal with us kindly,
Gods of the Thermic, we bow to your wills.
Grant us, ye gods whom we worship so blindly,
Three months in the hills.

But if they leave us, our more lucky brothers,
Leave us to bake in this desolate spot,
Grant us this boon, amid so many others,
To envy them not.

Let them rejoice wheresoe'er they be roaming,
Heedless of visions of jungle or rice ;
We will content us with beakers full foaming,
And plenty of ice.

34 TO THE GODS OF THE HOT WEATHER

Let us remain 'neath the swing of the punkah,
Lengthily lolling with little to wear,
Tumblers beside us in which we have sunk a
Full measure of care.

And when the days of your rule shall be
numbered,
Gladly consenting, oh hasten to fly,
And wake us, who 'neath your sway shall have
slumbered,
With rain in July.

March 1913.

GREY GOLD

WITH golden cloth of woven memories,
And momentary pearls
Strung on a rope fine drawn, I deck your form.
These garments of remembrance
I give to you, who only these may give.
So wearing them

Your beauty moves on music's misty wings,
You pass along the pathways of my mind
Unlocking gates to long remembered things,
Grey gossamer and gold,
They float around you there, our nights, our
days ;

Grey filmy gossamer of red-flaked dawn
And gold-barred greyness of a moonlit sea.
With girdlings of remembrance,
That twine and wreathe about and hold you
there,

I bind and keep you.
So in the pleasaunce of remembered things,
You shall be mine for ever, utterly.

18th July 1913.

A BROKEN DREAM

WHERE every breeze from all the seas was
whistling wide and free,
In that dread place far thrown from grace by
hate and mystery.
In that bleak spot I saw, God wot ! a work of
wizardry.
On either hand, along the strand, there drave
down on to me
Grim figures twain that bore with pain a cruse of
alchemy.

While yet at gaze with wild amaze, I wondered at
the sight,
Upon the left from view was reft the vision of
affright ;
On the reverse (Ah me ! the curse !) there rolled
up horrid night,

And to my ears, amidst my fears what would be
done ere light,

There came a wail from something pale, more
terrible than might.

And at the sound from all around there broke
out sobbing tears,

As one afraid by terrors made, may gasp forth
where he fears.

Wan lights that glowed upon the road now swayed
with loathsome leers,

And in their ring a pale small thing hacked at its
breast with sheers :

‘ I am,’ it said, with whited head, ‘ thy Fate that
burns and sears.’

18th July 1913.

CLAIRVOYANCE

DARKNESS hung limp around me : there were soft
things that stirring,

Muttered uneasy groanings, offended the quiet of
night.

Pigmy and whispered voices, each with its venom
and barb,

Pierced my cloak of stillness and poisoned my
peace for me.

Came whistling the dart, true-feathered, straight
flung forth from the mirth,

The scorn of a voice I had loved, ' He waiteth on
the star.'

Darkness hung on my eyelids, oppressing my soul
with sleep ;

Heart-sickness seized and held me ; almost my
faith had gone.

When silence was shattered in pieces, the dark
with lightnings was riven.

‘Hail groper in the night!’ I heard a mighty
cry,
Then like a flashing star you flamed across my
sky.

27th August 1913.

OUR LADY OF SORROW AND ALL TOIL

SLOWLY she smiles and sadly, this smiling lady
of mine,
Calling to mind the ghosts of fears long spent,
Calling to mind the rue of sins that I sinned long
ago,
Calling to mind the peace of a spot that I used to
know,
Calling me back from ways that I went,
Slowly on me she smiles and sadly, this lady of
mine.

.
'O brother,' comes the murmur, like pearls that
dropping slow
On beds of cushioned velvet, make rustlings as
they go.
'Have you done with clamour? Doth the world
its dues forego?
Are you ripened for the knowing that my lovers
know?

Granite is my roadway ; flinty are the
boulders ;

Heavy is my burden : bruised my lover's
shoulders ;

Rasping is their raiment ; empty are their
purses ;

Blessings few encountered ; many bitter
curses ! '

' Sister, in thy smiling is my hope of peace ;

Sister of thy pity, put me on thy road,

Let me win toward thee, grant me thy re-
lease ;

Sister, hear my pleading, lay on me thy
load.'

.

Her eyes are dark with longing, and darkened
with much pain,

Yet still her smile allures ; and men must take
their burden.

Their toil and sorrow grasping, to them shall be
this guerdon,

That on their ways a little their lady's smile hath
lain.

She bends towards me as I lie, my place among
the swine,

Slowly she smiles and sadly, this smiling lady of
mine.

2nd September 1913.

PHILOSOPHY

THE singer sang of countries far away,
His song was of the Infinite, the Vast ;
The secret of all being he laid bare,
Alike he sang the future and the past.
 Yet some who heard said in the throng,
 ‘ There are no heart-beats in his song.’

23rd November 1913.

‘ THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR BUT
FEAR ’

BECAUSE the night was dark and darkness night,
I moved in dread of them, dark dread ;
I felt the fear of them, and said,
‘ Oh bend me to Thy will, but give me light.’

But then, since day was light and naught could
hide,
I knew my utter nakedness,
And prayed the prayer of fearfulness,
‘ Give me or day or night, but at Thy side.’

When through vast spaces I discerned my God,
I feared my own unworthiness,
I fled his face in recklessness,
And in my course my fear was spur and rod.

Then came a peace when darkness was of naught,
Nor light a thing to hold in dread ;
For God within me rose and said,
‘ Save Fear, why hast thou any fear of aught ? ’

27th February 1914.

TO MY PALE QUEEN

O QUEEN, when first your dark-eyed loveliness
Broke all my life in twain, whereof one part
Was dark, not knowing you ; as by a dart
Of light one half a page held in duress
To darkness is set free ; then did I bless,
The radiant pulsing of your sweet strong heart,
Making your cheeks the home of Flora's mart,
And all your motions pact of youthfulness.
But when I saw you pale, the roses fled
From their sweet home of yore, my heart, awhirl,
Its first sworn fealty momentarily did hurl
Behind : yet ere the faith of years was dead,
Another, rising from its ruins, said,
' Others the ruby serve, but I, the pearl.'

25th March 1914.

THE GAMBLER

I AM sated with the sweetness of the sun,
I am weary of the flowers and their breath,
I would fain live yet again as I have done,
I would try another throw with Death.

I am cooped within soft places of the earth,
Well I know the ways of quiet and of rest,
But have I lost for aye the thundering mirth
That blazed out welcoming grim Death's jest ?

I have fought and striven as men strive and fight,
I have mocked both storm and sun, and all the
powers
Of dark places vainly working 'gainst the light,
Shall I now live easeful empty hours ?

12th April 1914.

THE PARROT

THE raven is a wicked bird,
Black-hearted is the crow,
And ghoulish is a gentle word
For ways the vultures know.

But of all kinds of bird and beast,
For undiluted sin,
The parrot flies in from the East
To score an easy win.

The parrot's heart is very small,
Although his eye is great ;
He never winks that eye at all,
But stares out, hard as Fate.

And join with me in pity for
The wretch within his claws,
For he will wreak a vengeance sore,
With horrid beak and jaws.

But though I fear his claw and beak,
His talon and his jaw,
'Tis not of them I mostly speak,
But of a thing I saw,

When flashed his pink-rimmed eye on me,
And there I saw full well
What I had always feared to see—
The wickedness of Hell.

And Hell, I saw, was cold and hard,
Though filled with lambent fire,
As if a gentle God had marred
Himself, in ways most dire :

For nothing in that Hell was wrong,
But all was fallen Right ;
All sound was wickedness in song,
And dark, perverted light.

The parrot's eye that told me so—
Brown green, and edged with pink—
Gave me this thought, where'er I go,
Which I do mostly think,

That wicked souls, too sinful far
For Hell's large honest mirth,
Live in these birds. So parrots are
Incarnate sin on earth.

15th April 1914.

TO JAMES, GOING HOME

JAMES, I must bid you remember,
When far from our heated toil,
From April to sweet September,
You tread on your native soil.

Remember your weary brothers,
Remember the nights in June,
Remember that 'there are others,'
And grant me this boon.

Pall Mall, the side that is shady
And sweet, as the poet sings,
Shall know you : perchance some 'Vade
Tecum' (angelic no wings)

With you shall gaze on its splendours,
Or hie with you hence in glee,
To Blanks', the popular vendors
Of afternoon tea.

James, I would ask you to notice
The prevalent hue of socks,
The spot that small as a mote is,
The hefty and beam-like clocks.

Oh tell me, my James, if ever
You mark a change in hats,
And mention if aught shall sever
The Nut and his spats.

So deep in my backwoods' jungle
On Fashion's wave I shall ride,
Safe on the crest as a young gull
That swims by his father's side.

I shall hear rude words men mutter,
But bask in the smiles of dames,
And thank *The Tailor and Cutter*—
(That 's you, O my James).

16th April 1914.

AN INDIAN SHRINE

THE babies play in the ruined shrine,
And the gods of old look down on them,
Dreaming, mayhap, of days that were.
Who shall despise them, who condemn ?

The temple shrine is a broken place,
And the gods of old a fallen race ;
But haunting the spot that their fathers won,
The lean grey lizards lie in the sun.

The old gods know the ancient truths
Hid from the babes who play in the shrine,
Yet they feel no more the heat of the sun
That runs in the children's blood like wine.

But the lizards know what the old gods know—
That only the time of things may show,—
More, too, they know why the babies run
And jump in the warmth of the golden sun.

15th May 1914.

SONNET

So, queen, you go : and with you goes my heart.
Then what remains to me of any worth ?
Shall now my lips and tongue yield them to mirth,
And you not here to bear the other part ?

My eyes, in truth, may now forget their art,
And blindly rove ; for on the darkened earth
Doth aught remain to give their vision birth,
That lighten only at your glance's dart ?

My arms no longer hold you in embrace,
No longer can my footsteps tend your way,
Direct yet blindly ; and no longer may
My hands caress the softness of your face.
So blind and motionless in this dead place,
' Return with speed and bring my heart,' I pray.

CHANT INVOCATIVE

C. PRIEST

STRONG is our Mother and heedless,
Fattened with blood of men,
Lusting for hearts of men,
Ruling the wills of men,
And turning the ways of men
 Into her ways.

PRIESTS

Strong is our Mother and cruel,
Cruel and many her days,
While we yet live let us praise,
Let us praise her and die !

Heedless, oh hearken !
Mother, give ear !
Thy children are calling Thee,
Calling and praising Thee,
Hearken, O Heedless !

VICTIMS

Cruel, we pray Thee
Shew pity on us,
Accepting our service
Of dying for Thee !

WARRIORS

Our strength is Thine own,
We yield it to Thee ;
War and its toils,
Thy gift to Thine own :
Blood and the spoils
(We yield Thee Thine own),
We yield them to Thee.

WOMEN

O Mother of all,
Who desirest men,
Of men children born,
Take as Thou wilt.

CHORUS (*all*)

Living we praise Her,
Dying, renew Her,

Let us endue Her,
With living, and die !

O Mother of all,
Thou hast drunk of their blood
(Blood prodigal-spilt),
Wouldst Thou eat of our corn ?

C. PRIEST (*recites*)

Ere this people was a people,
Wandering in the swampy marsh-land,
Them the wrath of Heaven vanquished ;
One by one the fever smote them.
Wives and maidens, men and children,
Died in trembling fear.
To the remnant came the knowledge,
Hidden long, by Her Revealing,
Her Appearing, Her Forthshowing.
Many days she led them, humble,
Worshipping, they grew more mighty.

(*Chants*)

Mother, we owe all to Thee,
Mother, we are nought but Thee,
Mother, deign our gifts to take.

VICTIMS

Cruel, we pray Thee
Shew pity on us,
Accepting our service
Of dying for Thee.

A TALE OF COLLABORATION

SHE ' WHO 's to begin ? I wish you would.
 No ! let me see, perhaps I 'd better.
 To start is easy, but I could
 Never make rhymes,' so I just let her.

SHE ' What can I say in the first line ?
(To me) You 're sitting there and looking silly,
 Of intellect you 've not a sign.'
 Her tone was more than *rather* chilly
 (So at this point I rushed into the
 breach).

ME ' " In days of old when knights were
 bold,"
(To her) That 's what I call a dashed good
 opening.'

SHE ' Perhaps it is ; but you 'll be old
 Before you find a rhyme for opening.

Besides it also seems to me
I've heard those words somewhere
before.'

ME 'Of course that's petty jealousy;
If that's your tone, I'll write no more.'
(Which I did.)

EPILOGUE (*by me*)

'Sic transit glor—' (You know the
rest;
Or if you don't you'd better learn it).
She'd dreamt of *FAME*: with equal
zest
I'd hoped for *Lucre*; Reader, spurn it.

November 1911.

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